

Testimony of Gregory B. Allard

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Public Health Committee

Tuesday, March 3, 2015

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee.

My name is Gregory Allard and my testimony today is related to:

1. *Proposed Bill No. 5911, An Act Concerning A Restructuring Of The Emergency Medical Services Advisory Board.*

I **oppose this bill** as it is presented before you today. Today you will hear several points of view with regards to the size and effectiveness of the Connecticut EMS Advisory Board. I can honestly say that I believe the Advisory Board is running well as of late.

This is in large part due to the Regional Coordinators within the Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS). For the last several years the Regional Coordinators have been the force behind the work coming out of the Advisory Board and OEMS. It is my belief that they have instilled a sense of energy and have been the support needed to make the Board productive. This energy has transferred to other members of the Board as well. I would like to take this opportunity to make sure you support the section of Raised Bill No. 6824 that makes the five Regional Coordinator positions permanent. Currently, they are durational and have relied upon members of the legislature to allocate funding from the Tobacco Fund to support these positions. They are well worth the investment.

Is there room for improvement with the Advisory Board? Sure there is; there is always room for improvement. I believe the Board is constantly looking to improve their work and are open and willing to hear concerns about where they can be more responsive as a group.

To the organizations that question the Advisory Boards communication ability I'd be asking them if they are present at enough meetings, if they have concerns; are they asking the pointed questions in a timely manner, are they making suggestions for improvement along the way? I am fairly certain you'll find that they aren't.

I have testified before a few committees this year and I have mentioned cooperation and communication in a couple of my testimonies. Yet again, I am thinking that is what is really required to resolve whatever issues are at hand here. One of the organizations expressing concern through this Proposed Bill has a seat on the Advisory Board. I would think they'd prefer to resolve the issues in a cooperative manner through effective communication versus this public forum. To me, this level of communication that involves members of the legislature is where you go if all else has failed.

This same organization is proposing an improvement that would remove communication between the local providers, at a grassroots level, and the EMS system. This level of communication is part of the reason the Regional EMS Councils exist. Regional meetings allow the local providers the opportunity to hear what is going on at the regional and state level and for them to express what they are experiencing at the local level. As President of the Eastern Region I hear what these local providers have to say and I am proud to represent them when I attend Advisory Board meetings. I in return bring to them what I hear at these Advisory Board meetings. Other members of our Regional Council attend Advisory Board sub-committee meetings and they also report back what they hear. Regional Councils are not unique to Connecticut, they exist in several surrounding states; New York, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont and Maine and I am sure there are more. Every service providing EMS and every individual provider have an open invitation to attend a Regional Council Meeting. I don't see many representatives from the organizations proposing this improvement which again is an opportunity to communicate they aren't taking advantage of.

Without the Regional Council Presidents or the Council of Regional Chairpersons this state would not be looking forward the second Connecticut EMS Expo www.ctemsexpo.org which in its inaugural year, last year, became the largest Expo of its kind in New England. This year we're anticipating the event to double in size. This group also conducts the Connecticut EMS Awards ceremony during National EMS Week in May. The ceremony is held in the Old Judiciary Room of the Capitol. Nominations are being accepted now through the website the Regional Presidents developed www.ctemscouncils.org. Again, all of these events are all done with the help of the Regional Coordinators (a worthwhile investment).

The Advisory Board and the Regional Councils serve their purpose in this state and as of late they've performed well. It is for the reasons I mention here that I urge you to **vote in opposition of Proposed Bill No. 5911.**

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory B. Allard